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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thanksgiving is Top Day for Home Cooking Fires **MID urges the public to follow safety tips to prevent fires**

Jackson, MS — When you welcome a fireman into your home this Thanksgiving, it is preferable that he is there to share your Thanksgiving dinner and not keep it from going up in flames. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 2006, Thanksgiving Day topped the charts once again as the peak day for home cooking fires. There were 1,400 home structure fires involving cooking equipment that year, which is more than three times the daily average.

“Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Cooking fires can easily be prevented by following a few simple precautions, such as staying in the kitchen when preparing a meal because fires often start when items cooking are left unattended,” Commissioner of Insurance and State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney said.

Annually, these fires result in more than half a billion dollars in direct property damage to homes and their contents in the United States. In Mississippi in 2007, of the over 5,000 residential fires reported to the State Fire Coordinator’s Office, 903 were cooking fires.

The MID offers these tips for safer cooking:

Stand by your pan

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.
- If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, boiling or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Keep in mind that you should avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while

cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

No kids allowed

- Keep kids away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove.
- If you have young children, use the stove's back burners whenever possible, and turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk that pots with hot contents will be knocked over.
- Never hold a small child while cooking.

Keep it clean

- Keep anything that can catch fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- Clean up food and grease from burners and the stove top.

“Mississippians can enjoy a safe and Happy Thanksgiving by being extra vigilant during their holiday cooking,” Chaney said.

Fire departments and senior citizen groups may obtain copies of Remembering When, a falls and fire prevention program for older adults from the State Fire Marshal Division of the Mississippi Insurance Department. Additionally, Risk Watch: Unintentional Injuries, a school-based injury prevention curriculum for pre-school through grade 8, is available to any interested school or fire department (while supplies last). Fire departments interested in participating in a smoke alarm installation program should contact the State Fire Marshal’s office for additional information.

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